

## Intro:

In Paul's great argument against sinning mankind, he covers all bases. I am going to go into a bit of a review in the first part of the message, so I'll not do that here.

But I think you can see by now that Paul's gospel indictment of mankind is thorough and complete.

- No one will be able to escape the truth of these verses.
- Anyone who is willing to examine himself in light of these verses will find himself in deep spiritual need, alone, condemned, without God, and with no hope in this world.
- *You* should see *yourself* in these verses. *You yourself* don't escape, not on your own, anyway.

As we move out of the first half of Romans 2, we move from God's word to the moral man to what I call God's word to the religious man.

It starts this way:

“Behold, thou art called a Jew...” KJV

“But if you bear the name ‘Jew’...” NAS

You will notice a slight difference in the translations here. We may spend a bit of time on that in our next message, but the difference between “behold” and “but if” is one letter. I think the “but if” is correct, but it isn't important for our message today.

What is clear is that beginning with v. 17, Paul turns his attention deliberately and directly at the Jew. Up till this point, his revelation of God's attitude toward sinners has primarily concerned Gentiles. He has touched on Jews and their notions of morality in the Law, but primarily he has been dealing with Gentiles.

The relationship of the Jews to the gospel and their place inside or outside the Church of Jesus Christ is a major theme of the book of Romans. We are taught the gospel here, but we are taught it in such a way as to make clear that the gospel is a distinct new message, one that God demands for Jews to respond in the same way as Gentiles, through faith and faith alone.

In this section of Romans, Paul is going to show why this demand is necessary.

Why does Jewish religion count for nothing in the Church of Jesus Christ?

From that question we are going to make a direct application to a different sort of man, one who has appeared in the world since the first century.

That is, we are going to be making application of these truths to the notion that a man who is a 'churchman', a religious man, stands in the same condemnation that the Jews before him did.

Our message today is called:

*If You Bear the Name 'Jew'*

*or, how a religious man is condemned before God*

Read Rm 2.17-29

**Proposition:** If a man cannot escape God's judgement by morality alone, he certainly will not escape God's condemnation by religion alone.

## I. Two men who cannot escape God's judgement

### A. The pagan man (Rm 1.18-32)

The pagan man experiences God's wrath [universal experience of sinning mankind]

1. The pagan man suppresses God's truth revealed in natural revelation (18-20)
2. The pagan man distorts God's truth by corrupting natural revelation (21-23)
3. The pagan man experiences God's wrath by being abandoned to all kinds of sins [manifestations of wrath] (24-32)

"You are guilty because you reject natural revelation."

At the basic level, every man is condemned on the basis of rejection of natural revelation. But... but... but...

Men have their objections, "but I am a good guy" [moral man]; "but I go to church" [religious man].

### B. The moral man (Rm 2.1-16)

The moral man is subject to God's judgement [ultimate experience of unbelieving mankind]

1. The moral man is subject to God's judgement by his own standard (1)
2. The moral man by making judgement agrees with the truth of God's standard and God's judgement (2)

3. The moral man is warned against presuming against God's apparent delay in judgement (3-5)
4. The moral man is taught to fear the destination of God's judgement (6-11)
5. The moral man is subject to the impartiality of God's judgement (12-16)

"You are guilty because you reject the operation of conscience."

One more objection remains to be dealt with: "but I go to church" [the religious man]

## **II. The means by which the Jews depended on religion in order to stand before God**

A. Pedigree: The historical confidence of the Jew (Abraham, covenant, history)

1. The Jews were privileged to be the sons of faithful Abraham
  - a. Abraham was a man called by God out of heathenism
  - b. Abraham was promised by covenant a series of blessings
    - 1) Land
    - 2) Seed (descendants and especially *one descendant*)
    - 3) Blessing (in you shall all the earth be blessed)
  - c. Abraham's descendants were privileged with a special relationship with God through the ages
    - 1) Exodus
    - 2) Nation
    - 3) Crown
    - 4) Prophets
    - 5) Promises
2. The Jews ignored the warnings of John (Mt 3.1-10)
  - a. Pedigree counts nothing with God
  - b. What counts is God's work on you, not your 'working' God with your pedigree

3. Still, the Jews threw this argument in the face of Jesus (Jn 8.31-44)
  - a. The Lord dismisses their physical parentage
  - b. Their true parentage is spiritual, and of the devil

**B. Liturgy: The religious confidence of the Jew (Moses, revelation, ritual)**

1. The Jews were given the Temple rites by Moses
2. The Lord condemned their confidence in their law keeping – they kept the external and missed the spiritual (Mt 23)
  - a. They do all their deeds to be noticed by men (23.5)
  - b. They make exacting tithes but forget the weightier matters (23.23-24)

The liturgy of the Jews did them no good, they made the spiritual law into a new idolatry, idolizing the minutiae of external law-keeping while ignoring the whole spiritual intent of God's law-making.

**C. Ethnicity: The ethnic confidence of the Jew (see Murray quote in Rm 2 study file, several scriptures)**

1. First use of the term 'Jew' in the Bible: 2 Ki 16.6
2. It had become a term vested with privilege in the minds of the NT Jews: they were a cut above other races by virtue of their ethnicity

"Paul's use of it here and in verses 28, 29 ... indicates that it was a name associated in the mind of the Jew with all on which he prided himself."<sup>1</sup>

- a. See Rm 2.17, 28-29
- b. Gal 2.15
- c. Rev 2.9, 3.9

It is ironic that one of the judgements that has befallen the Jews through history is from another nation who thought of themselves as 'the master race' – it is as if in that judgement, God turned the tables on Jewish pride by taking ethnic pride to its 'nth' degree, to the ultimate.

<sup>1</sup> John Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 81.

What a flimsy house of cards the Jews based their hopes in God upon!

- A pedigree: a perpetuation of DNA instead of a perpetuation of faith
- A liturgy: a particularization of laws instead of a confession of faults
- An ethnicity: a sneering comparison between men instead of a humble contrition before the One True Man

### **III. The metaphor of the Jew for the generic 'religious man'**

A. Tracing the theme of Jews as Jews falling short of the gospel of righteousness from God in Romans

1. The Jew addressed (2.17)
2. True Jews defined (2.18-29)
3. The advantage of Jewishness acknowledged (3.1-2)
4. The condemnation of Jews with all men (3.9-10)
5. The key to Abraham missed (4.1-3 *cf.* all of ch. 4)
6. The key to the Law missed (5.20-21, 7.7, etc.)
7. The place of the nation set aside (9-11)
8. The Gospel enables true fulfillment of the Law (13.8-10)

The point of this theme is that the Jews in their Jewishness (in their religion) missed the point of their own religion and certainly missed the point about Jesus Christ.

Their religion could not save them from the condemnation of God

B. No religion can save anyone from the condemnation of God.

1. The example of the 'church man'
  - a. He grew up in a Christian home
  - b. He grew up within a Christian church
  - c. He grew up with a Christian lifestyle

d. He grew up with Christian words and Christian rituals

Bearing a name is not the same as being named!

2. Recall the summary statements concerning earlier categories:

- a. The pagan man experiences God's wrath [universal experience of sinning mankind]
- b. The moral man is subject to God's judgement [ultimate experience of unbelieving mankind]
- c. The religious man is under God's condemnation [unique experience of self-righteous<sup>2</sup> mankind]

The man who thinks that his religious observances gain him ground and credit with God needs to think again.

The *whole weight* of the Book of Romans is against this notion!

## Conclusion:

**Proposition:** If a man cannot escape God's judgement by morality alone, he certainly will not escape God's condemnation by religion alone.

I said a few moments ago that the whole weight of Romans was against the notion that mere religious observances gain any ground and credit with God.

Let me be even stronger: the whole weight of the entire message of the Bible is against that notion.

You can't hope for heaven simply because you go to church.

You can't hope for heaven simply because you go to 'the right' church.

Religion cannot save you. Only Jesus Christ can. I urge you to throw yourself on Him and Him alone. Do it today!

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<sup>2</sup> Not completely satisfied with my adjective here. I mean to describe the religiously self-righteous man whose self-righteousness consists in external religion only.